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ABSTRACT

This document attempts to illustrate the inequality of education in Israel through the following: (1) an account of interviews with Israeli scholars, educators, and activists, and (2) a description of selective events in Israel that occurred between March and July, 1978. Some of the topics discussed in the interviews include integration in Israeli schools, educational backgrounds of Afro-Asian Jewish minorities in Israel, discrimination against Jewish minorities in Israel, and problems involved in the integration of Israeli schools. Some of the events described include actions taken to deal with rising inflation, housing problems, dental problems, problems confronting Oriental Jews, and educational reform. (EB)

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RESEARCH REVIEW OF EQUAL EDUCATION

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A Second Report on Israeli Education

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A Second Report on Israeli Education

Helen Friedman, Harold Friedman, and Meyer Weinberg

Unequal education is a fact of life in Israel, as we discovered in our recent visit to that country. In an earlier issue of the *Research Review of Equal Education,* entitled "Inequality in Israeli Education," the general background of the topic was sketched. In the present issue, we wish to accomplish two further tasks. First, a running account is given of interviews with some two dozen Israeli scholars, educators, and activists. Second, we have described selective events in Israel that occurred between the time of our departure – early in March 1978 – and the time of present writing, in July 1978. Our interest is in those events that relate to any topics discussed in the present and the earlier issues of the *Research Review.* It is thus hoped to illustrate the continuing character of the problems discussed.

Dr. Herzl Fishman, of the Ministry of Education, acknowledged the goals for the founding of the state had not as yet been achieved. "The goal was to achieve a different kind of society in this country – a society which would incorporate the ideals, values and sensitivities of the Jewish traditions, beginning with Biblical times, a society based upon social justice and a greater egalitarianism among the citizens."

At the time of achieving statehood in 1948, the majority of the Jews were from Eastern Europe, the Ashkenazis. There was a population of about six hundred thousand. During the next two and a half years – through 1950 – the population doubled, with six to seven hundred thousand coming from the Middle Eastern countries. These Afro-Asian Jews, not welcome in their own countries, came principally from Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, and Yemen. Dr. Fishman commented that this was already a problem within a problem. The Europeans came from a "Magna Carta" background, and were well-educated and completely dedicated to providing higher education for their children. The idea prevailed among them as it had with the mythical grandmother in Poland, who, when asked the ages of her grandchildren, replied: "The doctor is seven and the lawyer is five."

The other group, the Afro-Asians, could not be expected to have had such goals. For the most part, they had a dismal educational background, seldom exceeding four years in elementary school. They were at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale, and, to make an impossible situation more intolerable, they had families of between

ten and twelve children. The Ashkenazis, as one Sephardi leader told us, have "one boy and a dog."

"Today we do not consider the Afro-Asians as a minority," said Professor Nissim Yosha, also of the Ministry of Education. "Physically they are a majority, but in any case, we do not consider them as different from any other Jews. We belong to the same nation; we all have the same Jewish roots from which we feed our different traditions. We have different expressions of the same culture – the Bible and rabbinical teachings, which have the basic elements of Jewish education throughout the ages. Due to the creation of empires in the seventeenth century – Ottoman, Russian, Austro-Hungarian – a cleavage developed between the Afro-Asian and European Jews, each developing different traditions. Before the seventeenth century, the Jews from all parts of the world were united. Sephardic culture flourished in Spain, producing great poets and writers, including Maimonides (one of the greatest of the early Jewish writers), who was read by Jews all over Europe.

"Starting with the eighteenth century, in a gradual assimilation, all adopted the languages of their various countries, although Hebrew was continued as the religious language. European Jews adapted to their environment, and, as a result, frequently gained civil rights, opportunities for study and integration in general. However, they were usually not treated as equals and, because of this, modern Zionism grew.

"In the Middle Eastern communities, Jews were a tolerated minority and, under Islamic law, were ghettoized; they were second-class citizens and were taxed one-tenth of their income for being tolerated. They had to dress in white; they could not ride a horse when a Moslem was walking. Because they could not engage in commerce, all were artisans. In the face of all this, they maintained religious schools, retained their Jewish traditions, and produced a huge, rich literature. Much of this has been lost, but we are discovering that much is extant, as we are learning through our researches at the universities.

"Our problem is two sides of the same coin. We have a social-economic-educational gap – the usual disadvantages of the poor, the uneducated and unskilled, as opposed to the more affluent who have better educational backgrounds."

The educational gap distresses many educators in this country. Only some integration exists in the elementary schools of the larger cities, especially in Jerusalem, which has the largest percentage of Afro-Asian Jews. Neighborhoods determine the character of the elementary schools, and while there is some housing integration in all the big cities, for the most part the lower socio-economic group congregates in the poorest areas. The usual pattern, therefore, exists

where the schools in the affluent neighborhoods have a preponderance of children from European families, while those in the working class neighborhoods have a large majority of children from Afro-Asian parentage. This is a problem about which the Ministry of Education has been concerned for many years, but most efforts to correct it have foundered on the prejudices of the Ashkenazi parents. Also, government policy on this matter has not been energetically applied so as to encourage integration.

"Those against integration in Israel cannot speak up as they can in the U.S., because intolerance is so much against the grain of Jewish society." Dr. Chaim Adler told us when we met him in his office at Hebrew University. "They argue that integration between their children and the Middle Eastern young ones will be detrimental to both groups – the better-prepared will be held back and the poorer students will fall farther behind, developing inferiority feelings."

The only integration which the Minister of Education has thus far been able to put into elementary schools has been the result of a minimal amount of re-districting in Haifa, Tel-Aviv, and Jerusalem.

The next move to attain integration, a goal to which the Ministry is dedicated, came with the creation of the junior high schools, consisting of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, and attached to the high schools. This effort at reform started about ten years ago, and these junior high schools were integrated by design. It was also believed that this would upgrade the academic achievements of the Afro-Asian pupils.

Dr. Ozer Schild, dean of the School of Education at Haifa University, said: "The reform was based on the conception that integration in junior high would contribute to the diminishing of the gap in educational attainments. The answer is clear by now: 'No.' And still there could be many other advantages; this could lead to more intermarriages, more understanding and appreciation between the two groups, more respect for each other's traditions.

"Unfortunately, it does not lead to higher academic achievement. U.S. research could have foretold this; integration has achieved better academic success only when started in the early elementary grades."

Mr. Sholem Levin, executive secretary of the Teachers' Union, told us that the union opposed the junior high reform, although it did not oppose integration.

"We are against the start of integration at the ages of twelve, thirteen, fourteen," he said, "because we know, as teachers, that the only successful way is to give special training to the underprivileged at a very early age, before they are integrated with the higher group. Government policy must be the re-districting of the neighborhood schools, so that integration can take place when the kids are very

young. Progress in our junior high schools varies greatly. It is like a convoy of ships – they all must move at the pace of the slowest. The gap is widening; integration does not achieve mobility; those in class C stay there as do those in class A.

"The decision for the reform was made by the Knesset over the objection of the union. It was to be implemented in five years; now it is ten years and still not implemented. Today only 40 percent of the children are in junior high and the program is frozen at that figure. The minister claims that it is because of lack of funds but the real reason is the increasing objections of the parents. We cannot have a dual system. The reform must be completely implemented or discontinued and I hope it will be discontinued. Politicians should not interfere with education."

This reform was further criticized by Dr. Azfrira Ashkanazi of Ben Gurion University, who runs an experimental clinic sponsored by the Ministry of Health. This clinic deals with children who have been referred by teachers and doctors because they are judged to have learning incapacities. She is critical of conditions in junior high schools because she said they divide the students into ability groups, which means that the Afro-Asians are always in the lowest group.

"These kids are born with the same ability as any others, as shown by all of our research," Dr. Ashkanazi told us, "but the environment in which they grow up determines their ability to learn, especially to learn language."

She also believes that integration to be effective in regard to learning ability should start at a very early age, preferably in nursery schools at the age of two or three.

"Integration as we now have it, starting at the age of twelve," she declared, "looks good on the surface, but the kids who did not learn earlier still do not learn."

Dr. Ashkanazi is an animated, good-looking woman, completely absorbed in her work, and very decisive in her opinions. She pointed up the immensity of the problem when she described the environment from which these little children come to her clinic.

"There are mothers here who cannot speak a word of Hebrew after fifteen or twenty years of living in Israel. The fathers may speak a few words. Their economic standards are the lowest. They have no upward mobility, no desire for our good things, no knowledge, no anything. They give the child food, some clothing, almost never speak to him. They hardly speak among themselves; they are very primitive. Children at the age of two or three sometimes have no more than twenty or thirty words because they have not needed language. Here we do a lot of work with parents, which takes a lot of time and skill, but it is on an individual basis only. Every child

should be in a nursery school or a day care center, with highly trained people – educators – in charge. This is our great need in Israeli education, and it is almost wholly lacking."

In answer to our question as to whether the Ministry of Education has enough money for such a widespread and ambitious program, she answered that money should not be the question: "These schools are essential, especially in Israel, and are far more important than free high schools. Too many of these children do not have the skills for high school. Making the most of every child's potential will reduce juvenile problems, eliminate most juvenile crime, a great deal of which is not even reported. This early schooling will also greatly diminish the number of children with 'learning incapacities' whom our clinic now treats."

There is no lack of learned critics of the school reform movement. We met another outspoken professor in Dr. Yehuda Amir, of Bar-Ilan University outside Tel-Aviv.

"I know all people in Israel believe we have a serious integration problem," he began. "I can't imagine anyone who would tell you anything different. We have tried many things, including the school reform, but thus far, we see no positive results and have no definite answers. Still, we know that we must and will find at least some of the necessary solutions."

In Dr. Amir's latest researches he found that integration in junior high schools made no significant change in academic achievement, but did accomplish some positive social changes, especially where the groups were not too disparate. The professor does have some original ideas about how to correct the segregated situation now existing, some of which ideas are anathema to the Ashkenazi parents. He is well aware of this but he stands firmly behind his prescription. "We must break down the stereotype of inferiority in the Afro-Asians. To do this, and to attain integration, we must sacrifice some academic achievement. It is impossible to attain the goal of highest academic achievement and total integration at the same time. To reach our goal of one, not two, Jewish people, we should start by deemphasizing some academic subjects such as higher math or geography – is it really important to know how many countries there are in South America? –and putting in more extra-curricular subjects, more art, more music, home economics, perhaps even sailing. These are subjects in which our eastern friends successfully compete with the other group.

"We need to re-educate teachers and principals, because they have been taught to put their emphasis on the very aspect which creates the gap between the two groups – academic achievement. Enough of this demand for excellence! We have a heterogenous group not only ethnically but intellectually, and they should not be treated as one group. At present we have a streaming system of three groups; only

the middle one is integrated, the top groups being all Europeans, and the lowest all eastern children. This is a disservice to the lower achieving class and this is where the principal is all important and must give direction.

"One small effort in integration has given us some important clues. This is the summer camp program. Not that we want or expect to have many more camps, but we should incorporate the ideas used there into our boarding schools which are also integrated. These have an enrollment of about 20 percent of all of the high school kids, and they are mainly from the poorer economic class."

We first heard of these boarding schools from the Director-General of Education, Dr. Eliezer Shmueli, who told us that they had been designed to serve several purposes. One was to achieve total integration; another, equally important, was to give opportunity to those children of very large families whose rooms at home were so crowded, the noise so distracting that the child finds he simply cannot study.

Dr. Shmueli said that these schools are about twenty in number, have about an equal number of each of the two groups of Israeli Jews, and that the enrollment of each school is between seven and eight hundred, mostly boys.

"These children, we have found, have an average I.Q. of 105, with some as high as 120," he went on. "These are four-year secondary schools, and of very high quality, academically. Also, all kids have outside work projects, four to five hours a day, and so contribute to the economic self-sufficiency of our country, as well as to their own future security, since this work is vocational preparation."

It is also very interesting to learn from Dr. Amir that these schools take Arab children who make up about 10 percent of the enrollment. They live, study, and work alongside the Jewish children in complete harmony. This was the first we had heard of any Arab integration in Jewish schools. We were told that we must realize that this minority comes from a middle class Arab background and it is really not surprising that they do quite well in this environment.

All other secondary schools, according to the Director-General, are also integrated to some extent, with both groups of Jews (but not with Arabs). This is due to the fact that each high school serves a much greater area than the elementary school, and so usually draws from all classes. The final two years of secondary school are neither compulsory nor free, but currently there is a political fight being waged in the Knesset to make the last two years free. The greatest problem is to hit on an acceptable way of financing the tuition-free policy.

"However," said Dr. Shmueli, "whether this becomes law or not, I do not believe there is any student in Israel who cannot study in all

grades of our secondary schools because of lack of funds. We give grants for tuition, based on family income and size. In addition there is money for bus fare, books, clothing, school meals. Of course, the rich can pay, the poor are covered, but the lower middle class may be hurting somewhat in spite of our efforts."

Those in charge of these allocations have some strong views about the payment of free money. They said that they now challenge these payments, which go directly to the pupils on the recommendation of the principals, in sums of IL 300, 500, or 700. These payments are for students in senior high school, fifteen or sixteen years old, who have thus far given no accounting for the money received. The department wants an accounting now. There are questions being asked as to whether this money is being used for educational purposes – home library, books, field trips, laboratory fees – or for unrelated or frivolous uses.

The most vociferous and articulate critic of the educational administration we met is Mr. David Sitton, editor of *Bama'aracha,* a Sephardic newspaper, and a spokesman for underprivileged Jews. "Tuition in the eleventh and twelfth grades is three thousand pounds a year," he began. "You can imagine, can you not, how this affects our men whose incomes do not exceed four thousand a month, and whose families consist of eight, ten, or even fourteen kids? Even though there are some allowances for poor families, it is never enough, and certainly does not cover books, uniforms, transport, lunch, and other expenses. This is even true of the elementary schools, where only tuition is free.

"Our first demands are that high school tuition be discontinued, and all other expenses be paid by the school, or equal amounts given to parents or students in cash. You can see how necessary this welfare program is when you take into account these statistics: We easterners make up over 55 percent of the population, over 65 percent of the children in elementary school, but last year there were only 15 percent of our students in the universities. It is difficult to account for this when you realize the huge numbers of North Africans who went to France and became very successful in the universities there. Here, there is a slight improvement in some professional schools, but not at all in medical schools, where only the sons of doctors are admitted. The situation is intolerable.

"However, due to our pressures, education for our children is improving slightly. At this time, the Minister of Education is recognizing the need for paying special attention to the particular problems of the Sephardic children in order to bring up their academic work to the level of the European students. Classes are now smaller in the predominantly Afro-Asian schools and the teachers are being made aware of the unique needs of our children. In fact, special courses are

being developed which deal with the traditions of our people. The universities are conducting research programs into the early writings of the Jewish people who lived in Asia and Africa and we, in this office, are also working on the development of these courses, which are being too slowly introduced into the curriculum. It is not enough but it is a start.

"Still, it make me furious" – Mr. Sitton has an intense passion over what he considers injustice to the Sephardic children – "to realize how few of our students are in the universities. Our goal must be to have our rightful numbers in the professions and all the power positions in the country. At present, because they cannot pass the matriculation, the great majority go to technical schools."

When we referred this conversation to Dr. Shmueli, he scornfully exclaimed: "Oh, you have been talking to that politican. As I would expect, he did not tell you that in the last ten years the percentage of Sephardic Jews in the universities has gone up from 8 to 18 percent, and is increasing each year. Our policy is not to lower the admission standards for our minorities, such as the U.S. did for their blacks. I, a Sephardic Jew," – he came from Greece – "will fight bitterly against open admissions.

"The social mobility in this country is really terrific. Many Sephardis do not go to university out of choice, because they have good paying jobs and are happy in this life style [evidently good salaries and therefore better living conditions move those persons up in the social scale.] Most of these are graduates of technical schools. This type of education is not only beneficial to the individual but every person trained to be an expert in some field of technology is a big asset to his country."

This view was affirmed by Dr. Fishman, who pointed out that Israel is different from most other countries because there vocational training is a "badge of honor."

"Kids who can fix a tank or a plane," he said, "are contributing services that a philosopher cannot, and they are thus helping to insure the survival of our nation."

Some of the top philosophers in Jewish culture and thought are developed in still another educational branch – the religious schools. About one-third of Afro-Asian children and a small number of Ashkenazi are sent to schools known as "Yeshiva," where the emphasis is on Biblical studies, prayers and high academic achievement, leading to a university degree.

In the old city of Jerusalem we entered a school in one of the few modern buildings, just a few years old, to come upon an ancient sight – the youngsters, all boys, in their traditional skull caps, many wearing the same curls and prayer shawls as their teachers. It was the

hour for one of their two-a-day prayer rituals. They were swaying and chanting as their forefathers had done for centuries.

We questioned the value of this ritual education in a country that is up to date in almost every way save in the practice of religious observances by many, and controlled in some measure by the chief rabbi.

We asked a Jewish friend, not really very religious, whose children go to secular schools, what he thought of putting a great deal of money into the Yeshivas.

"It is a big part of life here, make no mistake about that," he answered. "And in some ways we must all admit this is what Israel is all about – preservation of the Jewish way of life."

There is, of course, some disagreement with this thesis. Susan Bellos, educational reporter for the English daily newspaper, the *Jerusalem Post*, says that religious schools are terribly afraid of integration. They want children from homes of only very orthodox parents and will accept no dilution of their programs. She said that although government policy is dedicated to integration in words, the religious schools receive government funds and no effort is made to integrate them, that practically all students are Afro-Asian. She cited one case where a "fanatical" group started its own school and received money from the minister of education, who is a member of the religious party. This, she declared, was scandalous, opposed by the Labor Party but the school still exists, still semi-private, completely segregated.

Dr. Michael Chen, Acting Head of the Department of Education, University of Tel-Aviv, said to us, that these schools place great emphasis on high academic achievement. He is in agreement with other educators on this.

"They look for genius at a very early age," Dr. Chen said. "As early as five or six years of age. In non-orthodox schools there is much more patience; there are many other roads to success, such as sports or technology, but in the religious schools there is no time for anything but study, study, study. The poorer students are rejected at the orthodox secondary schools, where there is no teaching of technical skills; also, the religious educators tolerate no so-called 'second chance' schools. The rejected boys go to secular high schools but those who remain in religious schools are among the top achieving students in the universities."

Even though some of the brightest and best students in the universities are Sephardi these comprise only about 18 percent of the total number of students.

The openness of Jewish society is attested to in the branches of higher education, where Arabs are admitted if they matriculate, and they form a significant part of the student body.

According to Ms. Bellos, about 8 percent of university students are Arabs and most of these are bitter anti-Israeli. The one other instance of Arab integration which we discovered was a high school where Arab students numbered about 100 out of a total of 800 boys and girls.

Again and again we asked persons we interviewed about this school but most of them only knew it in a vague way and were not sure where it was located in Haifa. We did finally visit it and had a talk with the principal Moshe Givron.

This unique school, the only one of its kind in the country, was begun by the former mayor of Haifa who believed that this institution, if successful, could serve as a model of integration to other communities. He could see no reason why Arab and Jewish youths should not be able to work and play together in an environment which recognized the worth of both.

The principal told us that they do participate together in sports and studies and the Arabs are able to hold their own. He said "they all have equal rights, equal prerogratives and equal duties; at their parties they dance together. Nevertheless, we have had some bad times. During the Eichmann trial the Arabs gave us trouble, painting swastikas on posters, and during the '73 war most of them stayed home. It is only when the political tensions proliferate that we have trouble in the schools.

"We have only one student council for both groups and three years ago an Arab was elected president. This year the head of the sports committee is an Arab."

This high school is the responsibility of the local community and members of the governing body believe it probably will not continue despite its evident success. The main reason is that the Arabs want their own school; they want Arab teachers and a curriculum of Arab literature and other classes suited to their traditions and life style.

Mr. Givron thought that when the new Arab school is established, although most of the Arab children in the area would attend it, some would remain in his school. He said that many of his Arab students listen to their own radio stations and that they want to be "Palestinianized."

Antagonism to this integration is two-sided, because some Jewish parents feel that the more educated the Arab, the more dangerous he is to the state. The principal scoffed at this narrow view, insisting it is important that the Arabs be educated and have their own lawyers, teachers, doctors, and engineers in their own villages.

The dichotomy between these two Semitic peoples is to be expected, given the wars and the fears and the unrest in the country. Still many young Arabs are very eager to take advantage of the

educational opportunities offered by the fine institutions of higher learning developed by the Jewish state. The percentage of Arabs in the universities, however, is still woefully low.

The other gap in higher education is more surprising and often distressing to those who work to close the differential between the two Jewish groups in the universities.

Dr. Shmueli is encouraged that the number of Afro-Asian students in the universities is steadily increasing each year, and is also pleased about the success of the vocational schools.

Dr. Adler, however, is still greatly concerned that only 4 percent of the Sephardis of college age are now attending universities. He told us that there are now alternatives for technological graduates.

"First they go in the army," he said, "where they may receive further training in their skills. After the army the young person may get a salaried job in his field, or go into private business. Finally, he now has an opportunity to sit for the matriculation examination. For this last alternative, crash preparatory classes are offered, and more and more young men and women, coming out of the military, are taking advantage of this chance for further study. So, you can see, we are making some progress toward equality in higher education."

A government official, who asked that his name not be used, has some decided ideas on the granting of scholarships leading to degrees. "We must be very careful," he declared, "about granting scholarships; they must go only to the most gifted. Also, we cannot give free education so that people can become social workers or the like, because this is an impoverished country and must give help to those people who can best serve the nation. Our scholarships, by and large, must go to the sciences, and not the humanities."

The members of the kibbutzim (communes, whose members are engaged in farming and/or industry) have long been known for their utter dedication to high academic achievement for their children, provide their own scholarships for their most gifted, in addition to any scholarships the government may offer. In spite of their tiny population, only 4 percent of the entire country, the kibbutzim have furnished most of the leaders in politics and the army. They have also furnished many faculty members of the universities.

Dr. Solomon Grabois, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Haifa University, suggested that a special program be created at the university for the study of Sephardic history, especially of the last four hundred years. In accordance with his suggestion a sub-unit of the Department of History has been formed. This is now in its first year and is concentrating on history, literature, and folklore.

Dr. Grabois, in agreement with Mr. Sitton, is insisting upon those extensive researches which will provide tools to be used in every

grade level of public schools. This, he considers, is the best method for making Israel a nation of one people. These studies will give the Sephardic Jew self respect and in turn will create a deeper respectful attitude on the part of the Ashkenazi – one culture is as good as another if you understand both.

"Five separate programs are included in our study," he said. "First, is language, which deals with special Arab-Jewish dialects. Here we have a research professor who, with the assistance of a group of students, is discovering the spoken languages of the Sephardic Jews, finding Hebrew words in Arabic and vice versa. This is the first step in the study of full Sephardic culture. We now have a possibility of developing language studies with the Institute of Oriental Languages in Paris.

"Second, is research about Jewish communities in Iraq, a project in history and social science combined.

"Third, is the study of the modernization of Jews in North Africa, the importance of the French language in this process.

"Fourth, is the study of children's literature suitable for children from five to ten years – stories mothers used to and still do tell their children. This is an important literature. We find here that traditions have not changed in five or six hundred years. Our sources include old people in settlements like Beit She'an. This is especially urgent now because we must complete our research before these elderly ones become senile or leave this earth.

"Fifth, is the development of textbooks and materials for teaching which will be printed next year. For this we have a research director who has invited many different people to contribute."

Dr. Grabois stressed the importance of dealing with contemporary social problems, thus going beyond a study of the past. He praised his university's concern for helping poor Sephardi immigrants to "bridge the gap." Concrete programs to help are administered by one central office, headed by Arlett Adler, a lawyer and an intense intellectual. We interviewed Ms. Adler in her office at Haifa University, along with young Maxime Peretz, treasurer of the development town of Beit She'an and a graduate of the university. He is a Moroccan by origin. At one time he was an activist in the Black Panthers, the militant voice of a small number of Sephardis.

Israel is a pioneering country and one can find no better evidence of this than in visiting the new development towns. Beit She'an is about sixty miles from the sophisticated city of Haifa, is still crude in appearance and could be a setting for a western movie were it not for the ancient archeological digs, uncovering an exciting Roman amphitheatre. The town was built to accommodate immigrants – houses and schools awaited the newcomers. Preparations were made

for the start of industry as soon as workers were available. Beit She'an is now settled by about fourteen thousand souls, 90 percent of whom are from Asian and African countries.

The story is told of the Yemenites, who were among the immigrants brought to this town and others. They came in planes, which they had never seen before, and this demonstrated their remoteness from the modern world. When they say these "magic carpets," they exclaimed that the prophets were right when the prediction was made "We shall all be rescued on the wings of the eagles." In order to activate the eagles, the Israeli government had to pay the Iman ten dollars per person to rescue twenty thousand Yemenite Jews. These and other unwordly immigrants are now populating the frontier towns.

At the present time Ms. Adler has under her jurisdiction nine such communities as Beit She'an and in each a dedicated volunteer is appointed to be known as a "Consul." He is paid only a nominal sum for his expenses and he is the link between his town, Ms. Adler, and the university. Included in his work is the setting up of courses in community relations and town management, thus bringing many persons into the administration of their own communities.

If the development towns are to flourish, it is obvious that the citizens must learn "the ropes" of operating civic institutions, including the schools.

"Those with the intellectual capacities must be brought by us to the gates of the university, Ms. Adler said. "They are entitled to higher education. We have, therefore, established two branch colleges near Beit She'an and other towns close by. We make the entrance door a little wider for our students, because most are adults with families and responsibilities; they have not finished high school but they can learn and they are educationally ambitious. In the end they all go out by the same door as all other students. We aid them in every way possible, including financial assistance. These branch schools have two-year courses, but our students can take two, four, or even six years to complete the work. We have special counselors in every department and special lessons are given when needed.

"Sephardic organizations have contributed to the costs of these programs, and thus far very little help has been received from the Minister of Education. This is one of my struggles. This is not just a Sephardic problem but an Israeli problem."

Peretz told us that he brings tenth and eleventh graders to Haifa University for two weeks each year. They have special coaching in English and math. Peretz takes them to the theater and in general acquaints them with the big city. This, of course, provides a contact with the university and is a preparation for future higher education. Each year, thirty to thirty-five young people enjoy this adventure.

Peretz also said, with pride, that his town has developed university scholarships which have been given to two hundred and thirty students in the last two years.

Later, on a sunny day, we walked through the unpaved streets of Beit She'an and talked with many people; some spoke almost no English and to our disgrace we spoke no Hebrew. The feeling among these people was obvious – their pride and pleasure in all that had been accomplished and all the new work being undertaken. Outside a primary school, children were busy and efficient operating their own flourishing vegetable gardens – no lack of vitamins here. Whether the curriculum was academically excellent, we did not know, but the kids looked happy and healthy and one hoped that they were receiving a good fundamental education.

Peretz was bitter because the Beit She'an high school did not measure up to that of the neighboring kibbutz. He had attempted to have the school districts of his town and the kibbutz amalgamated so that the children from both areas would attend the one high school. This failed because the Ashkenazi parents who dominated the kibbutz shared the prevailing opinion that their higher-achieving children would progress at a slower rate in an integrated school. He also told us of another development town close by where the minority (Ashkenazi) parents refused to send their children to the existing high school, which, of course, was predominantly Sephardic, but opened their own school instead. This, he declared angrily, was not unusual.

Dr. Schild commented that the deprived areas – and these would include the development towns – receive the youngest and most inexperienced teachers, while the kibbutz might well receive those more experienced; even though some may be "old and fossilized." He said that economic inducements are given teachers in order to make certain that the new community schools will have sufficient staff.

The teachers we met in Beit She'an were young and enthusiastic. Each had his specialty – one farming, another reading, another math. In the high school we met Mrs. Peretz, an attractive young teacher of science. The curriculum of the secondary school seems to meet national standards and would very likely be on a par with average schools in the U.S.

Teacher training is arduous and pragmatic, according to Professor Abraham Minkowich, of the Hebrew University School of Education. He is one of the architects of the teacher-training courses of the universities, and lately has been engaged in an ambitious evaluation project, the results of which are now being published in several languages. (A summary can be found in the *Research Review of Equal Education*, Vol. II, No. 1.)

Teachers in elementary schools are required to have a high school diploma plus three years in teachers' college; in order to receive an

appointment to teach high school, they must have a B.A. degree from a school of education in one of the universities.

Afro-Asians now comprise a near-majority of the trainees in the normal schools, although they are still a small minority in the universities. As in all other disciplines the percentage here is slowly increasing.

Prof. Minkowich described the procedure in the teachers' colleges. "After leaving the army, the students start a three-year course, and they immediately start working in schools three days a week – and I mean work. The other three days are spent in concentrated study. They help teachers with exams, grading, and discussions with parents. Each year they work in a different school. From the beginning they participate in staff meetings and learn in detail every aspect of their trade. All are girls. At the present time, most principals are male, but it is now the policy to appoint principals from the teachers' ranks, so eventually all will be women.

"Psychology is not taught as a separate course, but is geared to the general work. History of education is a course that does not exist, since we cannot afford the luxury of subjects that are not absolutely essential.

"We have theoretical and practical discussions with teachers about their work and we try to give them a great deal of autonomy. We let them struggle and find their own ways, giving them limited directions."

We interjected that American graduate students tell us they have had no practical preparation for the daily grind, and that when they begin to teach it is quite a shock.

Prof. Minkowich stated that he meets with graduate students once a month in order to prepare them for the problems they will have to face, but even after three years of practical training they are still shocked by the daily reality when they take over, he agreed.

We told him we had received mixed answers to our question as to whether there is much observable discrimination on the part of the Ashkenazi teachers toward their minority students.

"There is no formal discrimination," he said flatly, "but I must admit that there is a great deal in informal prejudice. As to the teachers, I would say that it is often unfortunate that they have low expectations of the achievement of what they call "Oriental" children, meaning of course, those from the Middle Eastern countries.

"The Ministry of Education, recognizing the need to raise the achievements of the disadvantaged, has now made additional resources available to the schools, in accordance with the percentage of Oriental students. The purpose is to have smaller classes, better teachers, special equipment. Also the ministry realizes that in education here, as Rabbi

Kalman Kahane recently said in the Knesset, 'we must worry about the stockings before the top hat.' In line with this, the ministry has made free tuition, available only to Afro-Asian children, for nurseries and kindergartens, when the parents are unable to pay."

Professor Minkowich calls this "positive discrimination," but believes it cannot be avoided. Recently in the Knesset, Rabbi Kahane advocated a bill which would make nurseries and kindergartens entirely free for all children of Israel.

If the teachers are often accused of having a defeatist attitude about the achievements of the Afro-Asians, one can imagine how this also applies to teachers in the Arab schools. Professor Yehuda Bien, Director of Arab Educational Studies at Haifa University, brought this home to us in no uncertain terms: "The worst problem in the Arab schools is the low expectation that the Arab teacher has of the capabilities and motivations of his students."

Dr. Bien is the author of the first book ever written about education of Arab children in Israel, published December 1976. Others will follow, he informed us. We found him to be one of the most compassionate persons about Arab children of all of those whom we had interviewed.

In the preface of his book, he thanks the members of the Department of Arab Education and Culture, attached to the Ministry of Education, for the extensive help given him in his work.

"Concealed in these pages," his books begins, "are the tales of hundreds of Arab teachers and of dozens of public school principals, entrusted with the teaching of thousands of Arab children in Israel. Their stories are not filled with the joy of creation. They speak not of affection and love of their fellow man. Deeply imbedded in them are signs of anxiety, deprivation and torment; apparent are the marks of the punishment rod."

Fundamental to his story is the sense of the gap that prevails between the work of the Arab teacher and his Jewish counterpart. "Every day," he continues, "the Arab educator lives the reality of the difference in teaching content and curriculum, in buildings and services, and in the greater number of pupils he has and how poorly they are prepared for school. These differences have penetrated his soul, eaten away at his self images, and undermined his capabilities."

Prof. Bien trained a team of ten Arab educators at his university. Together they worked in forty-two schools in thirty-three Arab communities, interviewing some five hundred teachers and principals. Professor Bien told us that the ministry realizes its obligations to the Arab citizens of Israel and also realizes the vital need to have this sector of the population as well educated as all others. It is obvious to any observer that a long and tortuous path lies ahead, but with such

men as Dr. Bien in the lead, the lives of Arab children will undoubtedly be improved for future generations. For the in-service training programs, implementing the Professor's findings, the minister of education has budgeted an initial sum of IL 3 million. The prevailing conditions in Arab schools are almost pathetic, according to Dr. Bien. The need for improvement is immediate and for that reason, he says, his approach is not pure research but action research, stimulating action and collecting findings about actions accomplished. Crowded schools are, in part, the result of crowded homes, each with ten, twelve, fourteen children. Thus, the over-large classes are not only caused by past government policy of inadequate support, but also by the failure of the basic approach to education in the villages -- the lack of responsibility on the part of the adults.

"I have read that every American Indian adult must teach the, young everything he knows about life," Dr. Bien said, "but that is not in the Arabic tradition, or if it ever was, it has been lost. There are no more Arab story tellers, nor stories such as *The Arabian Nights.* Last year for the first time we published native Arab stories for children. We have Arab researchers in the universities who work along these lines. I am the first man to train Arab educators to be very open, to be critical of themselves first and then of the school administration.

"In workshops started a year ago, we gave teachers the insight not only to teach from books and programs, but also to consider fundamental needs of the individual student, the capabilities and lack of same."

He explained that a major success has been the acceptance by the teachers of these ideas. By putting them into practice, the teachers have solved two-thirds of the emotional problems of the kids, without any help from psychologists or advisors.

We suggested that this would put the psychologists out of business.

"Could be," Bien retorted. "When you bring in an outside psychologist, you are branding the student in front of his classmates, thereby hurting his self-esteem."

Another, and perhaps the most important, success cited by Dr. Bien, is the fact that the teachers are constantly lifting their expectations of their student's abilities and, as a consequence, the achievement of both the poor and the good students is being appreciably increased.

We wondered whether these conditions of very low quality schools are prevalent in the Arab countries surrounding Israel, and we found the answer in an interview with Dr. Joseph Bashi, a specialist in Arab education in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

"The Arab school situation is better in Israel than in any other Arab state," he assured us. "In Egypt they have more dropouts by the sixth year than we have here by the eighth. In Morocco, kids are not infrequently held back, and are often eighteen years of age in the sixth grade.

"But don't get me wrong," he continued, "the situation here is not good, where the dropout rate of the Arabs is 35 percent compared with 7 percent of the Jewish kids. These dropouts do not cause trouble as do the youths in so many other nations: they only do not get educated."

Professor Bashi, a young crew-cut academician, is engaged in important research. He has tested the achievement of Arab children in grades four, six, and eight. He has also studied attitudes of teachers and situations in schools. Some of his findings are:

1. Of 18,000 Arab children born each year, 35 percent do not reach the eighth grade.
2. The average number of students in Arab classes is 31.9, compared with the Jewish average of 26.9.
3. Although Jewish schools vary greatly in quality, the poorest ones are better than the best Arab schools.

We learned from him that the curriculum in Arab schools is the same as that in Jewish counterparts except for religion and language, and that Hebrew is a compusory subject from the third grade. All teachers are Arabic except those teaching Hebrew.

He concluded that the Arabs are definitely under-educated because at least half their teachers are not qualified. "This has an historic reason," he said. "In the War of Independence in 1948, most of the Arab intelligensia, and this included most of the teachers, fled the country and did not return. New teachers had to be hired immediately and there were few, indeed, with proper qualifications. Today, because they are all members of the union they cannot be fired."

Professor Bashi spoke highly of the work being done by Dr. Bien and his group. He believes that great improvement is being achieved by the inservice training courses instituted by Dr. Bien, and that helpful changes in attitudes are occurring as a result of work done with the principals. Younger, thoroughly-qualified teachers are now graduating from the two Arab teachers' colleges, and eventually, natural attrition of the older group will allow for a much higher grade of education.

'Greatly improved and even inspired teaching is essential," he declared, "in order to cut down on the dropout rate and to compensate for the children's lack of motivation. Employment opportunities for

the educated Arab are few, except for the teaching profession, and even here, as we have seen, there are comparativly few jobs available and teachers often lack status in their own communities."

Nevertheless, many young Arabs seek and obtain higher education from the Jewish universities, especially at Haifa University where a number of Arabs from the Galilee attend. There is, however, on the West Bank, now under military government, an all-Arab institution – the University of Bir Zeit. Very few Israeli Arabs attend this college because it is regarded as of lesser quality than the universities in Israel proper.

We were welcomed at Bir Zeit because previous arrangements had been made by an Arab professor in the United States. The atmosphere here was charged, and even though we were met with courtesy we sensed this immediately. Hostility here between the two peoples is not below the surface. The university is known as a hot bed of radical anti-Israel Arabs; the president was exiled to Jordan by Israeli military authorities.

One professor and the vice president, both of whom we interviewed, stressed the fact that this is purely a private institution, attached to no government and no political machine, and is wholly financed by friends from abroad, a number of Americans, the World Council of Churches, and many other associations sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. Nine hundred students are being educated here and they come from the West Bank and Gaza. The faculty is composed of eighty professors, fifteen of whom are Americans.

We were amazed to learn that the entire standard curriculum is taught in English. It was explained that some of these young people go on to graduate school for study in the various professions, and for this they want to go to the U.S. and England; others want to transfer, usually to a college in the states, after a year or two. It was apparent that most of these students want to complete their education in an accredited university where English is the first language. The young professor with whom we spoke, Nafez Y. Nazzal, is a graduate and former professor of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. He is handsome, with an exceedingly friendly personality, until he become bitter over the difficulties his university encounters with the military government. He was born in Jerusalem when that city belonged to Jordan, went to the states and became an American citizen; now he has returned as a tourist to what he considers his own country, and is teaching with a temporary visa which can be revoked at any time.

Staff members bemoan the fact the university suffers from a lack of books and a lack of competent faculty members. They find great difficulty in inducing professors they want to accept contracts because of the "rigid restrictions of the military governor who must approve every appointee."

We asked them if they considered their institution to be unique. "Definitely," they answered, "because many of our students and some of our professors have been in prison."

"Also," the Vice President told us, "this is not a university where one can have true freedom of academic life. Sometimes we have rallies when our students decide to walk around the village to show their disapproval, perhaps of the assassination of a moderate Palestinian in London, or of one or more of the various restrictions placed upon us by the Israelis, which adversely affect our university affairs. Before the rally is over many of us might be in jail."

This tense condition did not prevail in another Arab college we visited. Of course, the Arab Teachers' College in Haifa has not a military government with which to contend, since it is in the state of Israel and is supported by the Ministry of Education. This college was established in 1949 at a time when the need for Arab teachers was extreme, because, as we had already learned, most of the Arab teachers had left the country during the war.

The Arab schools were maintained in the face of this need, but those teachers appointed out of necessity had no training. A staff member told us "those teachers came here and worked for three months to become qualified. We taught them education, psychology and other subjects, and we visited Jewish schools to observe experienced teachers in the class room. Examinations were given after this short period of intensive work. It was only after 1959 that we accepted those students who had graduated high school and passed the matriculation. At that time we put in a two-year intensive course for elementary school teachers and a third year for training to teach in secondary schools. This is still our program."

Enrolled at present are two hundred women and two hundred men – all young Arabs, planning to teach in one of the many Arab schools in Israel. The program is the same as that in the Jewish normal colleges, except that the courses are taught in the Arabic language and Hebrew is taught as a second language; they also teach Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religions, and these are not taught at any other teachers' institutions. This is evidently a well-run, well-staffed school; faculty members must have at least a B.A. degree, some have master's degrees, and four or five have doctorates. The school is under the direction of the Department of Arab Education and Culture, a section of the Ministry of Education. The heads and staff of this Department are putting a big effort into the college and one other Arab teachers' college. The state is supplying funds for the operations, as well as loans to the students. The tuition is IL 1400 a year, but the student can readily obtain a loan of from IL 2000 to IL 4000 a year. If the graduate accepts an assignment to teach in a remote Arab village, the loans are forgiven. Thus far, all graduates have been able to find jobs.

We inquired about the "activist research" that Dr. Yehuda Bien is engaged in with Arab principals and teachers. Did the staff-member approve of this work?

He commended Dr. Bien highly, but had some strong reservations.

"Bien has the kibbutz mentality [Prof. Bien is a member of a well-known kibbutz, where he makes his home] and he thinks that what is good for the Jews is also good for the Arabs. He wants to bring about changes too fast. While he is completely right in the long run, his sense of timing is wrong. Changes must come slowly for Arabs; if not, they will be resisted. Some have taken place, more will come, but this cannot be rushed. The Arab family with ten kids has different problems. There are economic crises, partly because the Arab will not allow his woman to work."

We asked what he thought of the possibilities of integration – could Arabs and Jews go to school together?

"This is difficult because of the political situation. Also, the different languages are a barrier, and the Arabs say 'they will change our language and make us anti-Arab.' An integrated faculty is fine."

We questioned as to whether young Arabs want to "go modern," and change the status of women and use birth control.

"We cannot change Arabic traditions and religion," he declared. "We cannot transpose good things in the Jewish sector to the Arabs. The Arab never heard of birth control. There is one exception to this rule. This is an entire village of upper Galilee, with a maximum family of four or five children. It is a new village, the parents are better-educated, many are graduates of Hebrew University, and they have a culture closer akin to the Jewish culture."

The principal is a member of the Druze sect, and there are sixty Druze students enrolled.

The Druze constitute a separate socio-religious community. They call themselves "Beni Ma'aruf" or "Sons of Mercy," according to Uri Stendel in his book, *The Minorities in Israel.*

"Throughout their history the Druze have been denied the status of a separate religious community," he writes. "The Ottoman government refused to grant them this privilege, and the British Mandatory Government was unwilling to change their legal status. Accordingly, in law, they were always subordinate to the Moslem juridical system. Responding to their pleas, the State of Israel granted the local Druze community independent religious status. At the same time, the Druze community is affected by factors which do not apply to others. Service in the Israel defense forces makes a considerable difference. To begin with, enlistments were entirely voluntary, but later, at the request of the heads of the community, conscription was introduced, similar to that for Jewish youths."

We visited a Druze vocational high school in Asifiya, a village high in the hills outside of Haifa. As we entered a rather good-looking school, we observed a soccer game going on in the playground, and we saw some of the female students and staff in the hallways. We drank tea with the headmaster, Atif Kayouf, and learned details about Druze education. Kayouf was himself born in the village and went through the local schools. He is very proud of the changes that have occurred since then. This is an Ort school, supported by the Ort organization in both Israel and the U.S., and by other Ort societies in the world, and also, of course, by the Ministry of Education.

The curriculum includes, besides the regular academic subjects, sewing, weaving, electronics, and municipal activities. No religion is taught, because, as the headmaster explaines, the Druze religion is secret, and is taught only in the home and place of worship.

Sixty percent of the teachers here are men, but the headmaster expressed a desire to develop many more well-trained women teachers.

"This is another step forward into the modern Jewish state," Kayouf said, and explained that the tradition up to now had limited women's activities outside of home and family.

"We also have a progressive national educational organization, which takes a deep interest in the welfare of our students. It is composed of both Jews and Druze, teachers and members of the Knesset. The Druze live in their own neighborhood in the village and nearby are Christian Arab communities. There is no hostility between the two," the headmaster said. "Children and parents of both sects are friendly. The Druze do not consider themselves Arabs although they share a common language."

The largest concentration of Arabs in the country is in the Galilee, and the largest city in the Galilee is Nazareth of Biblical fame. We were given a good deal of information by Mr. Nadim Bat-Heesh, former mayor of Nazareth and now town clerk, whose ancestors came from Lebanon, four hundred and fifty years ago. He is an elderly little man with a bright colorful personality. He is a Roman Catholic, who, as a child lived in poverty under the Ottoman rule, and is, he declared, completely self taught. His English is excellent.

"Since 1960," he said, "our big problem has been buildings, but now we have new schools in every quarter of the city – all paid for by the Ministry of Education. We have forty thousand citizens and more than ten thousand go to twenty-six elementary and secondary schools. Half are government and half are missionary, although all receive government help, especially the secondary schools because of their high tuition. The Ministry of Education sends us teachers for the elementary schools but we, ourselves, appoint those for the secondary schools. We have all Arab teachers and all Arab students.

We have a dropout rate of between 25 and 40 percent after age fifteen. This is due to the high cost of living and to the fact that our families too frequently have ten kids or more. However, more than 20 percent of our high school graduates go on to college – almost all to Haifa University. This is close to Nazareth, and the university has made a special effort to attract Arab students. Our people are welcome there and made to feel at home. They have no problems getting along; they fraternize easily with the Jewish students. There are even Arab professors at Haifa University who teach Islamic history and Arab culture. I am glad about this last course, because I believe culture, not religion, will unite people.

"I know of only two graduates of Bir Zeit University – this is considered a nationalistic university, and in the present political situation Israeli Arabs do not want to be considered as Arab nationals."

There was an education ministry inspector on the scene the day we visited the city and, unfortunately, he would not give us permission to see government schools. We did visit a Catholic girls school and the Mother Superior took us on a tour. It is a beautifully-run boarding institution, with children of all ages from pre-kindergarten to high school. We, of course, could make no judgment as to the effectiveness of the teaching.

In the last election in Nazareth, the Communist Party elected a mayor and a majority of the city council. The communist newspaper – *Unity* – is a powerful organ of support for the party.

Emile Tuma, editor of *Unity*, has a cramped office in a ramshackle house in a very densely-populated section of Haifa. Mr. Tuma, a highly literate and good-humored individual, seems to have a good deal of equanimity about the political scene. As we entered his office he turned off the radio. One could hear the last strains of a von Weber clarinet concerto.

The paper began thirty-four years ago, to serve the communist cause in Israel. Tuma claims that the party now includes 55 percent of the Arab electorate.

"Our paper is highly respected in the Arab world, and Jewish newspapers frequently reprint our articles pointing up the inequities suffered by Arabs within the state," he said. "You understand that there are many inequities in employment which affect the Arab family and the individual Arab's education. The Arabs are considered by the Jews to be a security risk, so we are denied access to jobs in oil refineries, in electronics, and in any of the so-called military complex industries. Our people must concentrate on the construction industry, agriculture, and services.

"We manage to get some Arab students into universities – today about fifteen hundred are in higher education – but this is not nearly

enough while the Arabs in Israel represent 15 percent of the total population. We are in the same boat as the Sephardic Jews."

He said that the struggle of the Arabs for better education begins with the elementary schools and is two-fold: first, there is a crying need for more schools, and second, the quality of education must be raised to the level of the Jewish schools.

"Last year," he went on, "we had a really fine school built in the Arab sector of Haifa. We had worked hard for this, but it is an ongoing struggle, since we do not have enough good schools as yet.

"Due to our determined efforts and the policy of the Ministry of Education, the percentage of Arab children in schools has increased considerably in the last several years. Also the curriculum is changing for the better as, for the first time, Arab history and language are being taught. The study of Palestinian history, however, leaves large gaps in time; what is known as the Arab period, from the seventh to the twentieth century, is missing for the most part, only mentioned in passing. Books on these subjects are being published by us, but the texts in schools are only compilations of lectures and not real books. Students know more about Britain and the United States than they do about the Middle East. I am happy to say that now, at long last, Israeli publishing houses are reprinting books published in the Arab world, such as *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*. In the past it was a Jewish policy to eliminate progressive thought from teaching, and to fire any teacher who would not conform, regardless of the qualifications of the teacher. There has been a change now. It is not easy to discharge teachers, but they are still pressured not to take part in political activities. Nevertheless, many teachers do publish in our paper under pseudonyms.

"If we can have an improved political situation, most likely our fight for equal education will be successful. In this fight we have a great deal of support from the Jewish democratic forces – communists, scientists, artists, educators, the Labor Party, mainly intellectuals. Up to four or five years ago, Arabs could not publish any books without going through censorship, but the Hebrew Writers' Association protested, and now this has been abolished, happily."

Mr. Tuma told us that he has many close Jewish friends and he considers this normal. Providing that the Jews are not "too obstinate," he said, there may be peace. He believes that, in that event, Jews and Arabs will live together amicably.

It is possible that Mr. Tuma is correct, and there are educators, Dr. Bien among others, who would approve this statement wholeheartedly.

Even if this friendly atmosphere were to prevail in this Jewish/Arab country, integration, particularly integration in education, does

not appear to be possible now or in the foreseeable future. Neither Arabs nor Jews, as we have seen, consider this desirable. Still the Arabs will not go away; they will only increase in numbers. Today, the Arab population is 15 percent of all citizens and tomorrow it can be 30 percent, considering the high birthrate of the Arabs.

It must be emphasized again that the Arabs do not represent the only integration problem within the state. Of top priority is the integration between the Jews of Afro-Asian origin and those of European-American parentage. There is no denying that inequality exists in education and in socio-economic status, and that some prejudice and bitterness between the two groups is evident.

All Israel knows that this situation must end. All Jews, of course, have the same roots, the same culture, the same religion, the same Bible. In addition the raison-d'etre of the country is the unquestioned acceptance of all Jews from all parts of the world.

When Jewish education is equalized, as it must be, the economic gap between the two Jewish groups may be closed. This probably differs from the situation in the United States, where even if education for the blacks were equalized, powerful economic differentials would remain. The future of Arab education is heavily dependent on a solution to the country's international plight.

Events of March-July 1978

1. The Economy and Its Social Consequences

The annual rate of inflation stood near 40 percent, a rise over the average of the previous three years. Predictions of end-of-year rates range from 33 percent by the finance minister to 50 percent by the Histadrut secretary-general. During April alone consumer prices increased by 5.5 percent. When the Bank of Israel called for a cut of IL 6 billion in the state budget, Histadrut Secretary-General Yeroham Meshel protested that since defense, debts, pensions, and other fixed obligations accounted for nearly four-fifths of the budget, "the cuts would have to be made out of what is left, and that means cutting services such as education, health, and welfare – services which the population needs."[1]

Housing continued to be one of the nation's most serious problems. During the first quarter of 1978, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported, three-and-a-half- to four-room apartments in Jerusalem and Haifa stood at $29,636 and $26,182 respectively. These prices were about one-third higher than six months earlier. In the Knesset, Mordechai Elgrabli said one-fourth the country's children lived in substandard housing. The *Jerusalem Post* editorialized: "The shortage of housing – especially in Jerusalem, and especially for young

1. *Jerusalem Post*, June 9, 1978, June 18, 1978, June 20, 1978, May 16, 1978, June 2, 1978.

couples and large families – is fast approaching the dimensions of a national calamity."[2]

On June 18th, a national conference of representatives from poor neighborhoods met in Tel-Aviv. They demanded cheaper housing and an increase of apartments for rent. They advocated government subsidies for housing poor families. Early in July, representatives from Jerusalem's poor areas met with prime minister Begin to voice demands for subsidized housing. The prime minister counselled patience until his five-year program was completed. (See below.) Housing minister Gideon Patt told the delegation housing policy must also serve middle class interests.[3]

The Begin administration announced Project Renewal, a program to rehabilitate housing for 45,000 families in 160 slum neighborhoods within five years. Total cost is estimated at $1.2 billion; this is to be split between the government and overseas private fund-raising groups. Prof. Eliezer D. Jaffe of Hebrew University's School of Social Work commented: "I recently visited a number of heads of American Jewish Welfare Federations. There seems to be a consensus among them that they will have difficulty raising their regular United Jewish Appeal campaign quotas, and they are genuinely concerned about an additional campaign for the special housing project . . . 'Housing' and 'slums' have never been presented to American Jews as fund raising goals, and unfortunately, donations reach their peak when Israel goes to war."[4]

Delegates to the Jewish Agency Assembly, meeting in Jerusalem, discussed extensively Project Renewal. Visiting one poor neighborhood in Kiryat Yovel, they found up to five children sleeping in one room. Minister Katz told the delegates that some 250,000 Israelis, in the words of the *Jerusalem Post*, "tread on the borderline of the disadvantaged." Gabi Wechsler, a leader of poor Jews in the capital city, demanded residents be consulted by Project Renewal. The next day, a briefing session informed delegates: ". . . Only 50 percent of residents of the disadvantaged neighborhoods completed elementary school, compared with 76 percent in the general population. Many of the young drug offenders and school dropouts come from deprived backgrounds. The income level in the neighborhoods is about half the average national wage." Max Fisher, chairman of the Jewish Agency board of governors, said Project Renewal would require ten rather than five years to complete. He pointed out that the program could not be limited to the construction of buildings but had also to provide educational, social, and employment facilities.[5]

Israel Katz, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, told the Knesset that one of the country's most serious problems was the large presence of non-working, non-student youth. Knesset member Yitzhak Yitzhaki

2. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1978.
3. *Ibid.*, June 19, 1978, July 4, 1978, May 16, 1978.
4. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1978.
5. *Ibid.*, June 27, 1978, June 28, 1978, June 30, 1978.

referred to the country's 10,000 neglected children. In Tel-Aviv alone, reported Prof. David Chen of Tel-Aviv University, 4,000 children are in violation of the compulsory attendance law by not attending school. Another 3,000 are of high school age. Of 600 girls, some are already engaged in prostitution. Prof. Chen said only high-minded phrases had resulted from earlier governmental efforts to meet the problem.[6]

Poor dental health is rampant among Israeli soldiers who come from poor families. Yehezkel Shemesh, chairman of the advisory committee to Jerusalem's Misgav Ladach Hospital, told a press conference: "Neglected teeth have become the badge of the underprivileged. Unfortunately, we have reached the stage in Israel where only the well-to-do can afford to pay for adequate dental treatment." Dr. Joseph Anice, chairman of the Israel Dental Association, reported that half the country's dentists served one-quarter the population, especially in the Tel-Aviv area. In some parts of the Galilee and the Negev, one dentist served every 13,000 residents; the national ratio is one to 1,400.[7]

2. Oriental Jews

Former Israeli Defense Force chief of staff Mordechai Gur said Oriental Jews would need "many years" before becoming senior officers. Gur later explained his statement: ". . . I want to change the situation in which 80 percent of soldiers up to the rank of sergeant come from one section of the nation, with this percentage narrowing up to 30 percent of officers up to majors, and even less thereafter." He had also said a long time would be needed "even for the educated ones" to perform with equal competence in technological matters. Knesset member Egrabli, born in Morocco, told Gur: "The times are over when your likes will take care of us. We will take things into our hands from now on." Yosef Va'ner, a Yemenite leader, said class rather than cultural community was the problem since so many Oriental Jews were poor. Labor minister Katz asked: "What motivation does a soldier have when his top officer says he'll stay at a low rank because of his country of origin?" Sephardi Council spokesman Matti Ronen said the elite was too ready to pin a label of inferiority on those who failed to advance.[8]

Schools in the Negev, 70 percent of whose population is made up of Oriental Jews, are facing severe problems. Not least of them is one of insufficient teachers. In Dimona, one-sixth the town's teachers are not returning in the fall. Armon Laredo, the mayor, said efforts to recruit teachers are failing because of the lack of special incentives: "Challenge has become nothing more than a pretty word. A teacher in Tel-Aviv moving to Dimona does not want to suffer a drop in living standard, and with prices tending to be higher here, that is a difficult thing to guarantee."[9]

6. *Ibid.*, May 23, 1978, May 16, 1978.
7. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1978, June 27, 1978.
8. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1976, May 23, 1978.
9. *Ibid.*, June 14, 1978.

Throughout the Negev, social problems abound. In 1975, for example, the percentage of people on welfare assistance ranged up to more than twice the national average. Overcrowding in housing was also disproportionately great in the whole area. In 1972 in Netivot, for example, nearly one-quarter of all families lived with three or more persons per room. In a recent symposium at Ben Gurion University, deputy prime minister Yigael Yadin criticized the late prime minister David Ben Gurion as insufficiently appreciative of human problems involved in large-scale Oriental immigration: "His mistake was in not realizing that their absorption was one of his main problems. A clear social policy should have been formulated, just as a clear security policy was developed."[10]

Beit She'an, a development town located near the Jordanian frontier and populated principally by poor Oriental Jews, came into the news as a private firm Clal warned it planned to close the Kitan textile plant, the source of jobs for one-fourth the town's workers. Clal officials said it was losing money and the government-built plant had no future. A Histadrut official charged that a cartel of textile manufacturers, eager to increase prices by limiting production, had offered Clal IL 30 million if it closed the plant. An agreement was reached with the government whereby Clal would remain in charge for another six months and then sell the plant to the government. Government leaders agreed a long-run plan must be found to sustain this large source of employment for the town.[11]

3. Integration and School Improvement

A report on the educational reform, including the junior high school reform, says that no achievement effect on disadvantaged students could be detected. Students in separate junior highs were compared with those in corresponding grades of elementary schools. "The comparative survey of pupils stemming from different ethnic origins," according to the *Jerusalem Post*, "demonstrated that a stable, constant gap remained in educational levels through the junior high school years." The authors of the report feel social integration gained. Parental support for the junior high school reform was stronger among Orientals whose children attended such comprehensive schools than it was among parents whose children attended predominantly Afro-Asian schools. More children have been induced to attend high schools, it is felt, by placing the junior highs nearby the former. The recommendations made by the report include the utilization of socio-cultural and socio-economic criteria besides ethnic criteria, as at present. It is urged that curricula and teaching methods appropriate to integrated classes be analyzed. Among the researchers who wrote the report are Professors Michael Chen and Chaim Adler. Another official committee, headed by Professor Yehuda Amir, is also examining the school reform.[12]

10. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1978.
11. *Ibid.*, June 13, 1978, June 20, 1978, June 22, 1978.
12. *Ibid.*, May 19, 1978.

The Knesset Education Committee, headed by Aharon Yadlin, discussed the report at some length. He thought the committee would approve the report's recommendations but criticized two features of the reform: (1) it involves only grades seven and eight and (2) excessive ability grouping is practiced in the reform and contributes toward the lack of academic success among the disadvantaged. He advocated total integration of all elementary schools. Committee members of various political parties endorsed Yadlin's proposal.

A forthcoming report on the Rehavia school integration project repeats a finding of 1971 that children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the project performed "significantly better than in other schools, in Rehavia achieving a level equal to the mean of all the children involved in the project." Children from middle-class homes did no worse than similar children in non-integrated schools. Researchers responsible for studying the project are Dr. Ze'ev Klein of Hebrew University and Dr. Yohanan Eshel of Haifa University. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, persons in the education ministry are seeking ways to cut the budget of Rehavia, eliminating the extended school day and extra teachers for disadvantaged students. Pressure from the Knesset education committee and other places stopped the cuts. The newspaper reported that "educators here are worried by the manoeuvers of anti-integration advocates in the ministry . . ."[13]

The education ministry decided to reduce the extended day in eight schools for budgetary purposes; the program in an additional 52 schools was not touched. (Only 60 schools out of 2,000 had extended day classes.) Director general Eliezer Shmueli said the eight schools enrolled relatively few disadvantaged children. Preliminary agreement was reached between Israeli and American educational authorities to cooperate on research on integration and teaching of the disadvantaged. The agreement is expected to be formalized in November.[14]

Certain undesirable effects have resulted unintentionally from efforts to westernize Oriental children, declares Health Ministry anthropologist Phyllis Palgi. She referred especially to the taking away of children from their parents: "The father sees himself as weak and the mother is confused. The children don't want to identify with such parents. Some decide that they are equally weak and confused and this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure in school. Others try to show themselves as being stronger than their fathers and too often do this by resorting to violence and delinquent behavior." Juvenile Judge Sharon Melamed advocated attending to children's rights: "I don't mean the right for children to do as they please, unsupervised. I mean a child's right to the care and guidance of parents or guardian and his right to opportunities for his social and educational development."[15]

13. *Ibid.*, June 14, 1978.
14. *Ibid.*, July 6, 1978.
15. *Ibid.*, May 26, 1978.

Three out of four students at Boys Town Jerusalem are from Sephardic families; three out of five students belong to families with from five to ten children. At the same time, Boys Town Jerusalem, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, "is one of Israel's top educational institutions." Students whose head of family are engaged in professional, business, or managerial occupations total only one-seventh of enrollment.[16]

4. Arab Education

"Until now," declared Knesset member Amnon Linn, "the Arab question has been treated as marginal but it is one of the central subjects in Israeli society." Also speaking at a symposium sponsored by the Van Leer Foundation was Israeli Arab journalist Mahmoud Watad who scored Israeli governmental lack of trust in Israeli Arabs. This, he insisted , was the basic reason for excluding Arabs from the armed forces. In the *Jerusalem Post's* summary of Watad's further remarks, he charged "the fact that they did not serve in the army . . . was used as an excuse to discriminate against them in national insurance payments, housing, employment, and entrance to universities."[17]

Dr. Yitzhak Nebenzahl, state comptroller, criticized the government's handling of Arab and Druze secondary education. In an official report, Nebenzahl wrote that while Arab and Druze enrollment in secondary schools rose by 119 percent between September 1969 and August 1977, and the number of teachers in those schools by 254 percent, the teachers as a whole were less qualified. From 1975 to 1976, for example, the percentage of teachers who obtained certificates by passing matriculation exams fell from 55.0 to 50.1. (Two weeks earlier, a report by the Henrietta Szold Institute released by the Education Ministry found somewhat more than half of all students attending teacher-training courses lacked matriculation certificates.) Four individual Arab and Druze schools were studied in detail by the Comptroller. Many outdated textbooks were found; 47 percent of the teachers lacked degrees; and only 38.5 percent had secondary teachers' certificates. A Druze regional high school, twenty-one of whose teachers were checked, was found to have only one teacher with the appropriate certificate; twelve lacked the necessary degree. Other schools were seriously deficient in certain facilities. In Nazareth, the high school had no fire-fighting equipment or air-raid shelters. (When the present writers visited Nazareth, two and a half months earlier, they were denied permission to tour the schools by the education ministry inspector.) Another school was not connected with the telephone network, electrical grid, or water and sewage systems.[18]

The *Jerusalem Post* recalled that in February 1977 the Knesset education committee had made comparable observations about the failures of Arab and Druze teacher-candidates in matriculation exams

16. *Ibid.*, June 28, 1978.
17. *Ibid.*, May 19, 1978.
18. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1978, May 16, 1978, May 18, 1978.

as well as complaining about high failure and dropout rates among the students.[19]

Construction of 56 four-room houses will mark the first large-scale housing project for Arabs near Jerusalem. Last year, Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek told the Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem: "They built tens of thousands of houses for Jerusalem Jews and only 200 for its Arabs . . . We were promised that a major housing project for Arabs would be ready in 1974 – yet until now the first framework has not gone up . . ." Construction of the new homes is to start in June 1978.[20]

Mayor Kollek told an American newspaper that while Jerusalem Arabs were offered Israeli citizenship after the 1967 war, few applied "and we didn't encourage them . . ." He noted that "Arab education [in Jerusalem] is run according to the curriculum approved in Jordan, so youngsters can go directly to Arab universities."[21]

Arab enrollment in Israeli universities will rise if only because the number of Arab secondary school students matriculating is expected by the education ministry's Council for Higher Education to grow to 1,600 per year from its present 1,100. The ratio of Jewish to Arab students matriculants is now 13.6-1. By the early 1980s, the Council expects it to be 10.9-1.[22]

On May 24th, the National Union of Arab Students called protest strikes on five university campuses citing alleged discrimination against Arab students. These included denial of use of university premises for political, social, and cultural events. They charged, too, that right-wing Jewish students were pressing for a political test that would be applied to Arab students. One of the latter told the *Jerusalem Post*: "We go to university as a matter of right and we also have the right to say we think the PLO represents the Palestinian people. We don't approve of their violent tactics and we don't want to do anything against the state of Israel. But we think there should be a Palestinian state alongside Israel and we have the right to say so." Protests were also registered at two West Bank Arab colleges in Bir Zeit and Bethlehem.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Israeli Students wrote the speaker of the Knesset, complaining of "the turning of the universities in Israel into a propaganda platform" for the PLO. A week after the May 24th demonstrations, Michael Tavor, head of Haifa University's student union, attacked the institution's administrators for failing to control a minority of Arab students who combined advocacy of the PLO with alleged use of disruption and disorder to express disagreement with Jewish students. Tavor stressed that his remark

19. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1978.
20. *Ibid.*, April 21, 1978.
21. *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1978.
22. *Jerusalem Post*, May 5, 1978.

did not apply to most Arab students on campus. Shlomo Breznitz, Haifa University rector, appealed to the Knesset not to approve legislation to permit exclusion of extremist Arab students: "The universities are governed by the laws of the country in every respect, and their autonomy is an asset to the nation worth preserving." At Hebrew University, in Jerusalem, the Arab Students' Committee conducted a three-day protest against its non-recognition by the university administration.[23]

Brigadier-General David Hagoel, commanding officer of the West Bank, was removed from his command for failing to verify subordinates' reports denying that Israeli troops had tear-gassed an Arab school in Beit Jala on March 21st. Investigation showed the denial was erroneous. An administrative reprimand was issued against the military governor of Bethlehem and his deputy. To avoid student demonstrations on Israel Independence Day, principals in several West Bank closed the schools. Some students were detained in preventive arrests.

In Gaza, university-level courses are to be offered next year by the Al-Azhar religious middle and high schools. Some Arab students attend universities in foreign countries but expenses are high. About 5,700 Gaza students attending universities in Egypt were expected to return home for summer vacations. The new courses will be patterned after those offered in Egypt's Al-Azhar University. About 6,000 Gaza secondary school students are to take matriculation examinations sent from Cairo via Athens.[24]

23. *Ibid.*, June 22, 1978, May 25, 1978, June 2, 1978.
24. *Ibid.*, May 3, 1978, May 5, 1978, May 16, 1978, May 17, 1978, June 23, 1978.